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**THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

By

**Thomas S. Melady**

**Submitted to the University of Western Ontario**

**MAY, 1931.**



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## THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A recent writer in the Hibbert Journal remarks that the existence of God remains so far unproved that it can yet be denied; that mankind is still and may ever be divided into the section that believes and the section that denies; and that while to some the proofs for God's existence are adequate, yet to others there is dis-satisfaction with the arguments presented in favour of the thesis. The writer continues:

"This state of things is so wholly terrific to the believer that, once more, he sets forth on the sacred quest; the journey in search of the Holy Grail; the philosopher's stone that will transmute his propositions into demonstrations.

"He will fail once more, even though he achieve something, for it is a question, not of proof, but of discovery. God has to be found, not proved." (Hibbert Journal, Vol. XXIV, 402).

The article in question is just one more indication of the perennial interest in the problem of God. Discussions of it sooner or later reach the pages of every journal devoted to Philosophy. Mankind is ever attempting to find certitude upon the question. I feel, then, that a review of the arguments for and against the existence of God, together with an attempt to evaluate some of them, will constitute a fruitful exercise for anyone constantly in contact with people whose thinking turns to philosophy and kindred subjects.

### The Problem in Ancient Times

Although Xenophanes was the first known thinker to raise the conception of God to a philosophic plane in contradistinction to polytheistic anthropomorphism, and, according to Aristotle, gave

the first a priori proof of the unity of God, yet it remained for Anaxagoras (circa 500 B.C.) to introduce the concept of Intelligence as being the source of all things. Reasoning from the apparent design, order, beauty, and harmony of the universe, he postulated a world-controlling Nous (Intelligence) as an alternative to blind chance or chaos. Although blind forces acting upon chaos would produce motion and change, the result would be merely meaningless and purposeless motion and change; it is intelligence only that could bring about law and order. The following fragments from his works indicate his theory:

"In the beginning there was an infinite number of things, all mixed up together, then mind came and separated them and arranged them all in distinct order." (D.L. 11, 6).

"Mind is independent; it is not mixed with anything else, is entire in itself. Mind is the most subtle and the purest of things." (Frag. 8).

"It has a supreme power over all things."

"Mind possesses unlimited knowledge." (Simplicius, 271 a, 30).

The Nous, therefore, according to Anaxagoras, possesses the following notes: (1) It is the cause of motion in the universe (2) It stands by itself, unmixed with anything else, exists apart from matter, and is simple. (3) It does not create matter, but arranges it. (4) It possesses all knowledge.

In viewing the Nous as a designer, Anaxagoras may be said to have been the originator of the teleological argument. It cannot be said that he did much more than to introduce a new theory into philosophy. He did not prove much if anything, but he did make a real attempt to explain the riddle of the world. He leaves philos-

ophy with a dualism of mind and matter, both of which exist side by side from all eternity. Aristotle has noted that Anaxagoras used the theory of the Nous whenever he was at a loss to explain why anything necessarily is, and that the introduction of the Nous is merely adding another term to the mechanism of the universe.

With Socrates there came into philosophy the first really true conception of a Divine Personality; and he also introduced the proof by final causes for the existence of God. He conceived the universe as the product of a moral cause; and acknowledged not only the existence of God but also of Providence. Socrates was therefore the first to make known to philosophy the moral God- the present day conception of God as held by the followers of Christianity.

Plato gave a fuller development and a more scientific form to the conceptions of Socrates. The Idea, according to Plato, is the universal and essential element in all things, that which is fixed and permanent in them. The Idea is superior to individuals, not only in quantity as being the one in the many, but also in quality. Amongst all the different Ideas, he gives the highest rank to the Ideas of what is most perfect- the Just, the Fair, the Good.

"...There is an absolute beauty and goodness, an absolute essence of all things...For there is nothing which, to my mind, is so patent as that beauty, goodness...have a most real and absolute existence." (Phaedo 77).

All these Ideas, or bases of visible and sensible reality, have the characteristics of existence, but they depend upon a higher

Idea, God, from which they cannot be separated. All these Ideas, therefore, have their substance in the Idea of the Good, which is God Himself:

"In the world of knowledge the Idea of Good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen is also referred to the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual." (Republic VII, 517 a).

Plato endeavours to establish God's existence by means of arguments, and therefore the first so-called proofs for the existence of God really originate with him. These proofs are four in number:

(1) The proof by efficient cause. Plato postulates a cause for everything that comes into being. His conclusion is that there exists a power capable of causing things to change.

(2) What is in the effect exists ideally in the cause. The world-soul is the cause of the universe, but the world-soul is created by God:

"...and in the divine nature of Zeus would you not say that there is the soul and the mind of a king, because there is in him the power of the cause?" (Phil. 30).

(3) The proof from motion.

"There are two kinds of motion; there is a motion able to move other things, but not to move itself, and there is a motion that can move itself as well as other things. The substance that can move itself is, therefore, the cause of motion in substances that cannot move themselves. The soul is, then, prior to the body, and, consequently, its character, and manners, and wishes, and reasonings, and true opinions, and reflections, and recollections are prior to length, and breadth, and strength of bodies. If, my friend, we say that the whole path and movement of heaven, and of all that is therein, is by nature akin to the movement, and revolution, and calculation of mind, and proceeds by kindred laws,

then, as is plain, we must say that the best soul takes care of the world, and guides it along the good path."  
(Laws X).

(4) The proof by final causes. This doctrine was held by Socrates as well as Plato, and was taught by them in contrast to the explanation of the universe by purely physical causes. Intelligence is demanded by these two philosophers as the final cause of the universe. Thus it is that Plato's system is teleological.

In Plato's system, one Idea may preside over several other ideas until the final Idea, the Good, is reached, which presides over all other Ideas. The question now arises as to whether the Idea of the Good is identical with God. Zeller says that if God is separate from the highest idea, only three relations are possible, all of which are equally objectionable. The only alternative, therefore, is that God is identical with the Idea of the Good. But since the Idea is not a person, God therefore cannot be personal. Stace concludes that where Plato speaks of God, he is to be thought of as speaking in a mythical manner as he often did.

Stace sums up Plato's philosophy in the following words:

"Plato is the great founder of idealism, the initiator of all subsequent truths in philosophy. But as always with pioneers, his idealism is crude. It cannot explain the world; it cannot explain itself. It cannot even keep true to its own principles, because, having for the first time in history definitely enunciated the truth that reality is the universal, it straightway forgets its own creed and plunges back into a particularism which regards the Ideas as existent individuals. It was these defects which Aristotle set himself to rectify in a purer idealism, shorn of Plato's impurities." (Stace- Critical Hist. of Greek Phil. 247).



It is to Aristotle that we owe the first complete and scientific proof of the existence of God. This is known as the Proof of the First Mover. The proof is summed up as follows:

"Everything that is in motion is moved, either by something else, or by itself. Let us suppose the former to be the case. Given these three terms: the thing that is moved, the mover, and the medium by which the mover moves the thing moved. The medium is a mover, since it sets the thing moved in motion; but it is also a moveable body, since it only communicates motion; therefore, the medium is only a middle term. Now between the moveable body and the mover, there cannot be an infinite number of middle terms, for the series of causes cannot be infinite; therefore by following the series of media we must arrive at a term which is not moved by any other. The first characteristic of the first mover is, therefore, that it is immovable, at least with regard to anything else but itself. If, therefore, the first mover were in motion, it could only be set in motion by itself. But a thing that moves itself cannot do so entirely, in the same instant, and in the same manner, for motion is given and received in the same indivisible point of time. If, therefore, a thing moved itself entirely, one thing would be giving and receiving, acting and suffering the same thing at the same time, and there would be two contradictories existing at one time and at the same ~~time~~ instant. The thing moved is in a state of potentiality; the mover is actual and cannot therefore be at the same moment and in the same sense both potential and actual. Thus, a thing that moves itself must consist of something that moves and something that is moved, and each of these two elements cannot be at one time the thing moved and at another time the thing that moves the other, for this would be a circle. Therefore, the mover as mover must itself necessarily be immovable. Consequently there are three kinds of movers: firstly the mover that imparts motion and is moved (natural things); secondly the mover that is moveable in itself, but immovable with regard to the rest (the fixed star, the first heaven); lastly, the mover that is immovable, both with regard to itself, and with regard to other things, and this is God. The absolutely immovable mover only moves things by the intermediary of the relatively immovable mover, the first heaven, and this it is that moves the rest of the world."

(Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Metaph.* 1, 459).

To say that the above proof for God's existence is merely adding another term to the mechanism of the world as Anaxagoras did, would indicate a misunderstanding of the meaning of true efficient

cause in Aristotle's philosophy. The true efficient cause is the final cause. With Aristotle, God is not a first mechanical cause which existed before the world in time and created it, but is a teleological cause working from the end. God's relation to the world is not one of time, nor of cause and effect, but a logical one. He is logically prior to all beginning, and as final cause is the absolute end, that to which all things move.

For Aristotle, God alone is absolutely actual and real. In the scale of being, God is the absolutely real, and other beings are more or less unreal. As formal cause He is essentially thought or reason. As final cause He is the absolute end, and as efficient cause He is the first mover. This argument comes up continually in the History of Philosophy, and we shall meet it again in this paper.

Is the God of Aristotle personal? Aristotle himself did not think of discussing the question. It was not discussed at all amongst the Greek philosophers, but it is a question of our own day. Stace defines personality as implying an individual and existent consciousness, and concludes that Aristotle's God cannot be personal because God being absolute form, and form being the universal, God cannot be individual; and since form without matter cannot exist, and as God is form without matter, He cannot be regarded as existent, though He is absolutely real. Since God is neither existent nor individual, He is therefore not a person.

"But the other hypothesis, that God is a person, means that Aristotle committed a contradiction, not merely in words, but in thought, and not merely as regards some un-

important detail, but as regards the central thesis of his system. It seems that he stultified himself by making his conception of God absolutely contradict the essentials of his system. For what is the whole of Aristotle's philosophy, put in a nutshell? It is that the Absolute is the universal, but that the universal does not exist apart from the particular. ... To assert that God, the absolute form, exists as an individual, is flatly to contradict this. It is not likely that Aristotle should have contradicted himself in so vital a matter, and in such a manner which simply means that his system falls to the ground like a house of cards.

My conclusion, then, is that it was not Aristotle's intention that what he calls God should be regarded as a person. God is thought, but not subjective thought. He is not thought existent in a mind, but objective thought, real on its own account, apart from any mind which thinks it, like Plato's Ideas. But Plato's mistake was to suppose that because thought is real and objective, it must exist. Aristotle avoids this error. The absolute thought is the absolutely real. But it does not exist."

(Stace- Critical Hist. of Greek Phil. 288).

At first sight, the arguments presented above may seem very strange; but there is a very good explanation given when the author states that God is not thought existent in a mind, but objective thought, real on its own account, apart from any mind which thinks it. The Scholastics reserved the term "subsists" instead of the word "exists" for use when speaking philosophically of God. The Absolute is so far above the comprehension of the mind that a special term other than existence is needed to speak of it. The following quotation expresses the same opinion:

"In referring to Him as to a person we must modify our usual idea of a particular body in time and place. Indeed we have to omit body, sensations, movement, instincts, emotions, volition. The Final Reason, in whom all things have purpose, the perfect goal of evolution attracting the universe by love unto Himself has no need of our views or advice. Worship would, indeed, seem to be natural, since not only men but the whole of nature, all plants and the very stars, are spontaneously drawn toward His excellence."

(Warbeke- The Searching Mind of Greece, 305).

The following quotation shows the thinking of the New Realists in regard to the concepts of subsistence and existence:

"We are brought to the sudden realization that there are many things in the world besides physical and mental things. Physical and mental things, events and processes, are real in this realistic pluralistic system, but so also are principles of reason, logical principles, internal and external relations, numbers, space, time, series, and such ideal entities as justice and beauty. These latter non-physical and non-mental entities we may, if we choose, call subsistents, if we wish to limit the term existent thing to such as are conditioned by space and time."

(Patrick- Introduction to Philosophy, 259).

It is not difficult to see that the Absolute, being the only reality in the sense of being absolutely independent upon anything else, cannot be conditioned by space and time, and that it is not exactly correct to speak of it as having existence which is a being's condition with respect to time and space. We shall meet the problem of a personal God again in this thesis.

#### The Problem in Mediaeval Times

St. Augustine held an important place in the thought of the Middle Ages:

"He constructed Platonism as the permanent structure of the thought of Western Civilization. It is obvious to everyone that Augustine shaped the thought for Europe, in an incredibly complete way, for the ensuing eight hundred years. It is just as true, though not so evident, that Christianity even after the assimilation of Aristotelianism in the thirteenth century remained fundamentally a Platonic philosophy."

(Carr- St. Aug. as Phil. Proceed. Sixth. An. Mtg. Am. Catholic Philos. Association, 88).

St. Augustine agrees with Plato in a number of points:

- (1) The world is the result of God's goodness. (2) Time is an image of eternity. (3) Time was created. (4) Evil is the negation of good and disappears with the whole view. (5) The supreme good is imita-

tion of God. (6) The theory of expiation in which happiness is connected with virtue, and misery with vice is also held by both.

St. Augustine, however, taught, unlike Plato, the doctrine of creation ex nihilo:

"How didst Thou make heaven and earth? ... it was not as a human worker fashioning body from body... nor didst Thou hold anything in Thy hand wherewith to make heaven and earth. For whence couldst Thou have what Thou hadst not made whereof to make anything? Therefore Thou didst speak and they were made, and in Thy Word Thou madest these things." (Confessions, XI, v).

While Plato in the *Timaeus* relates that the world was created by secondary gods working under the direction of the sovereign God, St. Augustine taught that God created the world directly and without the aid of intermediate agents. The gods and the angels are not the creators of animals any more than the labourers are the creators of the crops and the trees.  
(*De Civitate Dei*, XII, xxiii).

God creates out of goodness and munificence, and not because He has need of creatures. Before He created things He wanted nothing, and in creating them He added nothing to His nature:

"What, therefore, could there be wanting unto Thy good, which Thou Thyself art, although these things had never been... the which Thou madest not out of any want, but out of the plenitude of Thy goodness? ... For to Thee, being perfect, their imperfection is displeasing, and therefore were they perfected by Thee, and were pleasing unto Thee; but not as if Thou wert imperfect, and wert to be perfected in their perfection." (Confessions, XIII, iv).

In reply to those who asserted that because God is eternal and immutable, His acts must be eternal and immutable, and therefore the creation must have existed from all eternity, thus destroying the idea of creation, St. Augustine teaches that time

too was created.

We are not interested in following St. Augustine further in connection with this thesis, because the arguments he develops are not proofs for the existence of God. His views of creation are included here because of the influence he had on thought during the middle ages, and because of the relation they bear to the problem of God's existence in the history of thought.

The Ontological Proof developed by St. Anselm of Canterbury is an important one to consider. There are several ways of stating this celebrated argument. I shall give two statements of it, because it seems that a good deal of the conviction carried by the proof depends on the way it is worded.

(1) You cannot have an idea of a perfect being unless that being exists.

(2) The being of which you have an idea is not a perfect being unless it exists; and if you can imagine the case of a perfect being that does not exist, then that being would not be perfect; and if it didn't exist, you could not have an idea of it.

The best quotation I have been able to find giving at a glance St. Anselm's own statement of his famous argument is as follows:

"Certe id quo <sup>majus</sup> cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est potest cogitari, esse et in re, quod majus est. Si ergo id quo majus cogitari potest est in solo intellectu, id ipsum quo majus cogitari non potest est quo majus cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest existere; ergo procul dubio aliquod quo majus, cogitari non valet et in intellectu et in re." (Proshogium Sive Fides Quaerens Intellectum).

St. Anselm's argument has been supported and attacked from

his day to the present. St. Thomas Aquinas, Richard of Middleton, and Kant, for example, attacked it. St. Thomas attacked it on the ground that everyone does not necessarily mean by the term "God" a being than which no greater can be conceived, and that even grant-such an understanding, His real existence would not follow:

"...this proof, according to him (St. Thomas), contains in fact two main flaws.

"The first is to suppose that everyone necessarily means by the term 'God' a being than which no greater can be conceived. Now, many of the ancients considered that our universe was God, and amongst all the interpretations enumerated by St. John Damascene, there is none which amounts to the definition under discussion. For all such minds the existence of God could not be evident a priori. Secondly, even granting that by the word 'God' everybody understood a being than which no greater could be conceived, the real existence of such a being would not necessarily follow. If we grasp in our mind the meaning of these words, it does not follow that God exists, except in our mind. The necessary existence of a being than which no greater can be conceived, is therefore necessary only in our mind, and only after the above definition has been accepted; but it follows by no means that this being, so conceived, possesses a real and de facto existence. There is therefore, no contradiction in asserting that God does not exist."

(Gilson- The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, 41).

Guanilo, a monk of Marmontiers in Touraine offered practically the same objection, and used a comparison to strengthen his case: that of an island than which one can conceive none more beautiful; and he states that this island must therefore exist if St. Anselm's argument is to be accepted. Kant said that I can have an idea of a sum of money, but it doesn't put the money in my pocket.

We shall see later that these objections arise from a misconception of the argument. On the other hand, the argument was considered valid by such giants as the following: William of Auxerre, Richard of Fishaere, Alexander of Hales, John Pecham, St. Bon-

aventure, Giles of Rome, Mather of Aqua Sparta, William Ware, Spinoza, Hegel, and Descartes.

I shall now state the argument in my own way, and then consider the objections that have been raised against it:

I either have the idea of a perfect being or I have not. If I have, then I have to grant that my idea of a perfect being contains the attribute of real existence. Otherwise my idea is that of a possible being only, and therefore I cannot say that I have the idea of a perfect being. External reference is inherent in the nature of judgment itself. A judgment always relates itself to some assumed order of facts and relations. It does not presume to make them, but simply finds and reports them. To account for this external reference in our ordinary judgments is one of the most difficult problems of philosophy. So far as our problem is concerned, I merely note that when I make such judgments as: "The sun is warm", "Gold is yellow", or "Grass is green", it seems that my intellectual assent to the judgment and outer reference depend on an accumulation of circumstances or instances. But there are other judgments in which this is not true. For example, if I comprehend the whole, I cannot help but give my assent to the statement that the sum of the parts is equal to the whole. If I comprehend 'equilateral triangle' I have to agree to the equality of the sides. The kind of judgment found in St. Anselm's argument answers to this latter type. The very terms themselves carry with them their own guarantee, and compel assent.

For St. Anselm, the truth that God exists is a truth of



this kind. We mean by the term 'God' something than which we cannot conceive anything greater. But something that exists at the same time in our mind and in reality is greater than something existing in our minds only.

The first objection of St. Thomas that many of the ancients did not mean a perfect being when they used the term 'God' does not apply, because it does not prove that they did not have the idea of a perfect being. In any case, there does exist the idea of a perfect being, and therefore the argument is not affected.

To the second objection of St. Thomas, that even if one had the idea of a perfect being, such a being need not necessarily have real existence, I reply that the idea of a perfect being includes the attribute of real existence. To deny existence except in the mind, limits the idea of perfect and therefore destroys the idea of perfect being.

To Guanilo's example of the most beautiful island, I respond that the case is not parallel. An island is already limited. The argument applies only <sup>to</sup> the case of a perfect being. Anselm's argument is only valid when applied to a perfect being.

Another frequent objection brought against the Ontological Proof is that it contains a jump from the ideal to the real order. It all depends on what is meant by the jump; if it means that there is a reference to a reality external to the mind, then it may be said that we are continually jumping from the logical to the real order. St. Anselm would say that this is merely begging

the question: that is what the whole argument is about. If the jump from the ideal to the real order is illogical, then the point is to show where there is a break in the logic. But to say that the argument is invalid because there is a jump from the ideal to the real order is an objection only, and not a refutation.

We now come to the arguments put forth by St. Thomas Aquinas for the existence of God. They are five in number: The Proof of the First Mover, The Proof from Efficient Causes, The Proof from Potentia, Proof from the Degrees of Being, Proof from a Consideration of the Government of Things.

The Proof of the First Mover may be stated as follows:

"It is certain- and our senses witness to the fact- that there is movement in the world; everything that moves is set in motion by something. Nothing, in fact, is in motion unless it be in potency with regard to that towards which it is moved; and nothing per contra, moves anything except as it is in act. To set a thing in motion means to cause it to pass from potency to act. Now, a thing can only be brought from potency to act by something which is in act. For instance, it is heat in act (for example fire) which makes the wood, which is only potentially hot, actually hot, and to that extent, moves and alters it. But it is impossible for a thing to be both in potency and in act at the same time in reference to the same things. Thus an actually hot thing cannot at the same time be actually cold, but only potentially cold. It is therefore impossible for a thing to be, at the same time and reference to the same things, both mover and moved, i.e. set in motion by itself. Whence we see that everything that is in motion, is moved by something else. If, on the other hand, that by which a thing is moved, is itself in movement, the reason is that it is, in its turn, set in motion by some other mover, which is again moved by another thing and so on. But it is impossible to regress in this way ad infinitum, because, in that case, there would be no first mover, nor consequently other movers, for the second mover imparts movement only because the first set it in motion, as a stick moves only because the hand imparts movement to it. To explain movement it is consequently necessary to regress to a first mover which is itself not set in motion by anything, i.e. to God." (Summa Theologica, l. 2,3).

The Proof of the First Mover is not complete until two propositions involved in it have been established. The first is that everything in motion receives movement by some other thing, and the second is that an infinite series is impossible. The latter is an objection brought against the proof by Kant, as we shall see later on, when he says that the impossibility of an infinite series has not been proved.

Since the proof of the First Mover was developed from Aristotle by St. Thomas, it is the Aristotelian arguments for both of the above propositions that I shall now present.

Three hypotheses are presupposed in regard to the first proposition: (1) For a thing to be in motion of itself, it must contain in itself the principle of its movement; otherwise it is evidently set in motion by some other thing. (2) The thing must be moved in toto, i.e. it must be in motion in respect of its whole and not in respect of one of its parts. (3) The thing in question must be divisible and have parts, since everything that is in motion is divisible.

The proof of the first proposition, based on the first hypothesis, is stated as follows by Gilson:

"That which we assume to be moving itself, is moved in toto, hence the repose of one of its parts implies the repose of the whole. Indeed, if one part remained at rest, while another is in motion, it would no longer be the whole which is set in motion in toto, but one part which is in motion, while the other would be at rest. Now, nothing the repose of which depends on the repose of another thing, moves of itself. If, in fact, the repose of one thing depends on the repose of another, of necessity its movement also depends on the movement of another, and consequently, it does not set itself in motion. And since the thing which we assume to be in motion does not set itself in motion, it follows necessarily that everything in motion is moved by another thing."  
(Gilson- The Phil. of St. Thos. 49).

The second proof is stated as follows:

"Now, everything that is in motion is set in motion either by itself or by accident. If moved by accident, it does not set itself in motion; if it sets itself in motion it is moved either by violence or by nature; if it is moved by nature it is moved either by its own nature like the animal, or by another, like the heavy or light bodies. Thus all that is in motion is moved by something else." (Gilson- Phil. of St. Thos. 49,50).

The third proof is also cited in the same work, page 50:

"Nothing is at the same time, in reference to the same things, both in act and in potency. But everything is in potency in as far as it is set in motion, for movement is the act of that which is in potency, in as far as it is in potency. Now all things which impart movement are insofar in act, since nothing acts except it be in act. Consequently nothing is at the same time and in respect of the same things, both mover in act and moved: therefore, nothing moves of itself."

Aristotle also gives three proofs of the second proposition: that an infinite regress is impossible-

(1) An infinite number of bodies must be assumed; and since a body which moves and is moved is set in motion at the same time as it imparts movement, all the bodies must move simultaneously if one moves. The result would be an infinite number of bodies moving simultaneously in a finite time, which is absurd. Another way of stating this is to say that since contiguity of bodies is necessary for motion, there would result a single infinite thing in motion in a finite time, which is also absurd.

(2) In the absence of a first mover, all other things in the series would have to function as intermediate movers, and therefore there could be no movement in the world.

(3) By inverting the order of the terms of (2), we arrive at the same absurd result, viz. that there would be no movement in the world.

There are those who maintain that the first mover need not be God. St. Thomas would not expect assent to the first mover being God until the whole of the proof had been developed through a consideration of the attributes such a first mover would have to have, such as eternity, simplicity, aseity, unity, etc.

There is just one more thought to add to a consideration of the Proof of a First Mover, and that concerns the relation of the infinite regress to time. St. Thomas does not speak of the impossibility of an infinite regress in time, but when the universe is considered; and an infinite regress is seen to be impossible because the series of causes in the universe are hierarchically arranged.

The second great proof of St. Thomas is that from efficient causes, in which the procedure is through a series of causes back to the first uncaused Cause, or God. This is the same method as in the first proof, but a different order of reality is made the basis of it, and the impossibility of an infinite regress is again invoked and made part of the proof.

If the principle of causality were not admitted, but in place of it, the thesis that there is no necessary connection between what we call cause and what we call effect, the proof is weakened unless it can be demonstrated that what we call cause and effect is not merely an unrelated series of movements. This point will come up again when we consider some modern philosophers, particularly Hume.

The third proof of St. Thomas is based on Potentia, or the aptitude to change. Actus is the fulfilment of such an aptitude. A change of any kind is a movement from Potentia to Actus. It is evident that there is change in the world. Potentia precedes actus in the same being. In the strict sense, actus must precede potentia, for, in order to change, a thing must be acted on, i.e. it supposes a being in actu. No being in the world has in itself a sufficient reason to pass from potency to act of itself. Hence the change from potency to act is dependent on another being. Since an infinite regress is impossible, it is necessary to posit the Supreme Actus, Actus Purus, God, Who is not in Potentia, but Who is Necessary.

The fourth proof goes from evidences of perfection in the universe, back through greater and greater degrees of perfection in beings, to the Ultimate Perfection, God. This proof is also dependent upon the impossibility of an infinite regress.

The fifth proof of the quinque viae starts with evidences of order in the universe, back to the Supreme Orderer, God.

The last four proofs are dependent on the first proof. All the proofs depend upon (1) the admission that knowledge has as its beginning the observations of the senses: "Nihil est in intellectu qui non prius fuerit in sensu." (2) the admission that an infinite regress is impossible, and (3) the acceptance of a necessary connection between cause and effect.

#### The Problem in Modern Philosophy

Descartes is the first philosopher in whom we are interested when we come to a discussion of the problem of God in modern

philosophy. One reason for this is that his philosophy contains many elements that were found in mediaeval and ancient philosophy, but the more important reason is that his method was entirely original and used only by himself. It may be said that his method of philosophic doubt, which accepts as proved only that which is made self-evident, while it had been used before, received a tremendous impetus under Descartes, to such an extent that it is recognized to-day as being the philosophic method par excellence. The method is also unique in that it starts from thought and the thinking subject as a basis for philosophical reasoning. I cannot doubt my own thought; for my very doubt is a thought, and I who think or doubt must exist, because if I did not exist, I could not think nor doubt. "Cogito, ergo sum."

Following out his method of philosophic doubt, Descartes, by analyzing the content of his own mind, gave three proofs for the existence of God. The first of these has been called the proof "A Contingentia Mentis", and can be stated as follows:

I have in my mind numerous ideas such as magnitude, situation, substance, duration, number, colours, heat, cold, wax, wood, beauty, justice, etc. But these are either substances, modes of substances, or ideas of corporeal things; and since I am a substance myself, it is possible that the ideas I have of them might have come from myself. There remains the idea of God; and since I am a substance, I might have the idea of substance from my own being, but I could not have the idea of an infinite substance. The only conclusion therefore, is that God exists, since there must be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect.

The following is the proof in the words of Descartes:

"By the name God, I understand a substance infinite, (eternal, immutable), independent, all-knowing, all-powerful; and by which I myself, and every other thing that exists, if any such there be, were created. But these properties are so great, and excellent, that the more attentively I consider them the less I feel persuaded that the idea I have of them owes its origin to myself alone. And thus it is absolutely necessary to conclude, from all that I have before said, that God exists; for though the idea of substance be in my mind owing to this, that I myself am a substance, I should not, however, have the idea of an infinite substance, seeing I am a finite being, unless it were given me by some substance in reality infinite.

"And I must not imagine that I do not apprehend the infinite by a true idea, but only by the negation of the finite, in the same way that I comprehend repose and darkness by the negation of motion and light; since, on the contrary, I clearly perceive that there is more reality in the infinite substance than in the finite, and therefore that in some way I possess the perception (notion) of the infinite before that of the finite, that is, the perception of God before that of myself, for how could I know that I doubt, desire, or that something is wanting to me, and that I am not wholly perfect, if I possessed no idea of a being more perfect than myself, by comparison of which I knew the deficiencies of my nature?

(Descartes- Meditation III, Of God; That He Exists).

In the above proof, Descartes borrowed from the Scholastics the principle, "That there must be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in the effect". It also assumes the existence of a necessary connection between cause and effect; and both of these have been disputed in the history of philosophy.

While he concludes that only an actually infinite reality could explain the reality of the idea of the infinite in the mind, Descartes does not overlook the necessity of seeking an explanation of this idea in some other way. He examines three explanations:

- (1) That the idea might come through negation of the finite; (2) That the idea might have come through a combination of causes rather than from one single being, God; (3) That all these perfections



might exist potentially in myself, and that I might have secured the ideas of them through indefinitely adding to them.

To the first possibility, that of negation, Descartes replies that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and thus the notion of the infinite is in my mind before that of the finite; and in addition the idea could not be derived from the non-existent, since it has more reality than any other idea.

To the second possibility, that of multiplication, Descartes says that the unity, simplicity, and inseparability of all the things which are in God constitute one of His chief perfections, and that a multiplication of causes could not have put the idea of the unity of these perfections into my mind.

To answer the third possibility, Descartes says that my knowledge is seen to be imperfect in that it grows gradually, and continues to increase. God, however, is infinite, and cannot add anything to His supreme perfection. The idea of an actually infinite being cannot be caused by a being that has only potential existence.

The second proof put forth by Descartes is an answer to the question: "Would I, who possess the idea of God, exist if there were no God?" He replies:

"And I ask, from whom could I, in that case, derive my existence? Perhaps from myself, or from my parents, or from some other causes less perfect than God; for anything more perfect, or even equal to God, cannot be thought or imagined. But if I myself were the author of my being ... I should have bestowed upon myself every perfection of which I possess the idea, and I should thus be God." (Descartes, *Meditations*, 111).

To counter the objection that my existence might have come from some being less than God, Descartes writes as follows:

"But perhaps the being upon whom I am dependent, is not God, and I have been produced either by my parents, or by some causes less perfect than Deity. This cannot be: for, as I have before said, it is perfectly evident that there must at least be as much reality in the cause as in its effect; and accordingly, since I am a thinking thing, and possess in myself an idea of God, whatever in the end be the cause of my existence, it must of necessity be admitted that it is likewise a thinking being, and that it possesses in itself the idea and all the perfections I attribute to Deity. Then it may again be inquired whether this cause owes its ~~xxxxx~~ origin and existence to itself, or to some other cause. For if it be self-existent, it follows from what I have before laid down, that this cause is God; for since it possesses the perfection of self-existence, it must likewise, without doubt, have the power of actually possessing every perfection of which it has the idea, - in other words, all the perfections I conceive to belong to God. But if it owe its existence to another cause than itself, we demand again, for a similar reason, whether this second cause exists of itself or through some other, until, from stage to stage, we at length arrive at an ultimate cause, which will be God. And it is quite manifest that in this matter there can be no infinite regress of causes, seeing that the question raised respects not so much the cause which once produced me, as that by which I am at this present moment conserved." (Meditations, lll).

In order to avoid the idea of infinite regress, Descartes brings in the idea of conservation, and states, in effect, that it requires as great a power to conserve, after creation, as it required to create. I do not think that Descartes proves this; I feel that he takes it as an assumption.

The third proof of Descartes is the Ontological Proof of St. Anselm, which has been discussed before in this paper. It will be of interest to add, however, an objection and reply not given previously. Gassendi (1592-1655), objects that existence is not a perfection, but a form or activity without which there can be no perfection. Descartes replies that in the case of God, existence is truly a property in the narrowest sense, because existence is

proper to Him alone, and it is only in Him that existence is part of essence.

The three proofs brought forth by Descartes appear to me the Ontological proof of St. Anselm all over again. Both start with the observation that I have in my mind the idea of a perfect being, and both deduce that I could not have the idea of a perfect being unless such a being exists. To other beings the argument would not apply, and both philosophers are agreed on this. Descartes starts with an analysis of the content of his mind, while St. Anselm, as far as the proof of God is concerned, appears to have done the same. I conclude, therefore, that Descartes merely stated St. Anselm's argument in a more elaborate way.

Leibnitz (1646-1716) remarks that the possibility of the perfect being must be proved or assumed if we are to infer that it exists. Descartes assumes that God is possible. Leibnitz calls Descartes's proof imperfect because it assumes that God is possible in Himself, and adds that if anyone could prove this, we should then have a truly mathematical proof of God's existence. His attempt to set out the possibility of God is stated as follows:

"Thus God alone (or the necessary Being) possesses this privilege, that He must exist, if He is possible; and since nothing can hinder the possibility of that which includes no limits, no negation, and consequently no contradiction, that alone is sufficient to establish the existence of God a priori. We have likewise proved it by the reality of eternal truths. But we have also just proved it a posteriori by showing that, since contingent beings exist, they can have their ultimate and sufficient reason only in some necessary Being, who contains the reason of his existence in Himself." (Monadology, 45).

Leibnitz does not sufficiently explain how it is that what does not contain negation does not imply contradiction. He

introduces the cosmological argument for the existence of God, however, from the principle of Sufficient Reason. This method of presentation is peculiar to him:

"And as all this detail (of possible things) only involves other anterior or more detailed contingencies, each one of which again requires a similar analysis in order to account for it, we have made no advance; and the sufficient or final reason must be outside of the series of this detail of contingencies ( i.e. accidental causes), however infinite this series may be.

"And thus the final reason of things must be found in a necessary substance, in which the detail of changes exists only eminently, as in their source. And this substance we call God." (Monadology, 37 and 38).

Spinoza (1632-1677) developed a proof for the existence of God through using definitions, axioms, propositions, and corollaries from the propositions. It was thus an attempt to secure a proof in the same manner as mathematical propositions are demonstrated. It really amounts to a support of St. Anselm's argument, and is given as follows:

"Prop. XI. God, or substance, consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality, necessarily exists.

"Proof- If this be denied, conceive, if possible, that God does not exist: then his essence does not involve existence. But this (by prop. vii) is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists.

"Note- "For since ability to exist is power, it follows that the more reality belongs to the nature of anything the greater is the power for existence it derives from itself; and it also follows therefore, that the being absolutely infinite, or God, has from Himself an absolutely infinite power of existence, and that He therefore necessarily exists. ... Whatever perfection or reality those things may have which are produced by external causes, whether they consist of many parts or few, they owe it all to the virtue of an external cause, and, therefore, their existence springs from the perfection of an external cause alone and not from their own. On the other hand, whatever perfection substance has, is due to no external cause. Therefore, its existence must follow from its nature alone, and is, therefore, nothing else than its essence. Perfection consequently does not prevent the existence of a thing, but establishes it; imperfection, on the other hand, prevents existence." (Ethics, I, note and Prop. XI).

To Bossuet (1627-1704) we are indebted for presenting in a new way the argument of Plato, proving the existence of God through the existence of eternal truths. There are truths which would not cease to be true even if no application of them could be made by reason of the object to which they are attached being non-existent. For example, the truth that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal, would still be true if such triangles had no reality. Neither are these truths dependent on the existence of a human mind, for they would still be true if there were no human minds. But these truths must depend on something, and must have existence somewhere. Bossuet says that these truths subsist in God and depend upon Him.

"If now I seek to discover in what subject these truths reside, eternal and immutable as they are, I am obliged to admit the existence of a being in whom truth eternally subsists and by whom it is forever comprehended; and this being must be truth itself, and must be all truth, and it is from Him that the truth is derived in all that is and is comprehended outside of Him."

(Bossuet- *Connaissance de Dieu et de soi-meme*, Ch. 1V).

It is plain that there must be a repository for these truths, not only for one truth, but for all; not only for the simple truths, but for the most profound. No human mind could by any chance be the repository for all truth, because the human mind is finite. And it must also be admitted that there are many truths as yet completely unknown to any human mind, some of which may be discovered. And truth to be apprehended, must reside in a mind, because truth is the proper object of mind. Hence the repository of truth must be an Intelligence, eternal, and infinite. This Intelligence is God, Who necessarily exists.

David Hume (1711-1776) in his "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding" states that there is no necessary connection between cause and effect; that all we can posit in regard to the universe is a succession of events; that we infer a necessary connection through habit. Nor are our thoughts exempted: our mind is but a collection of mental states.

If this teaching were true, all proofs for the existence of God would have to be thrown out: not only those dependent upon the principle of causality as far as material objects are concerned, but also those dependent upon the principle of causality as far as our thoughts are concerned. The best we should be able to do is to say that we can know nothing about whether God exists or not.

Hume begins by affirming as "a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation (cause and effect) is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings a priori; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other." With that I can agree; it is the same thing as saying that experience is the source of our knowledge. His example of the billiard ball will give an idea of the rest of his doctrine:

"When I see, for instance, a Billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? All our reasonings a priori will never be able to show us any foundation for this preference." (Section IV, part 1, Conc.Hum. Under.).

To answer Hume's questions, I reply that it is quite possible that any of the things he suggests might happen to the billiard balls used in the example. But what I do know about this and every other two conjoined events, is that, given the first event, something necessarily must result, and that therefore there is not only a conjunction of the two events, but a connection, and a necessary one, which we call the effect of the first event known as the cause. Suppose that for the first time in my life I were asked the question: "What will happen if I apply this flame to that barrel of gunpowder?" I might certainly not know that there would be an explosion; but I should just as certainly know that something would happen- that there would be some effect, even if that effect were nothing at all as far as I might be able to tell. The child, who for the first time puts his finger in the flame of a candle, knows in so far as a child can know that something will result. That the actual result is not what he expected makes no difference: the point is that he expected something to happen. I agree with Hume that the particular result can never be predicted with absolute certainty, and that it is through habit we arrive at particular conclusions as to what will happen when you have a conjunction of particular bodies. A perfectly reasonable conclusion to draw, therefore, is that there is a necessary connection between cause and effect; particular causes may give rise to particular effects different from what was expected, but the general principle of causality remains unassailable.

Kant (1724-1804) subjected the proofs for the existence of God to criticism, and then introduces one of his own known as the moral proof. He reduces previous proofs to three, viz. the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological.

To the ontological proof, Kant replies that existence is not a real attribute, but is simply the position of a thing. Otherwise there would be one attribute more in the being that exists than in the being that is thought, which Kant says is impossible, for in that case thought would not be adequate. A hundred real crowns has no more content than a hundred crowns in the mind. We shall wait for Hegel's answer to this contention.

Kant says that the cosmological proof is insufficient, and that it presupposes the ontological argument. It would lead us to infer an architect of the world, but not a creator. It would also lead us to infer a most wise cause, and not one infinitely wise, since our experience makes known to us nothing absolute and because our experience also shows us imperfections as well as perfections. Hegel answers these attacks on the proofs for the existence of God, so it will not be necessary to dwell on them here.

Kant's proof, based on moral grounds, may be stated as follows: If the moral law is not a chimera the sovereign good must be possible; in other words, the harmony between virtue and happiness must be realized. For this there is required a will higher than nature, and higher than man; and this is God.

"There is not the least ground, therefore, in the moral law for a necessary connection between morality and proportionate happiness in a being that belongs to the world as part of it, and therefore dependent on it, and which for that reason cannot by his will be a cause of this nature, nor by his own power make it thoroughly harmonize,



as far as his happiness is concerned, with his practical principles. Nevertheless, in the practical problem of pure reason, i.e. the necessary pursuit of the summum bonum, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we ought to endeavour to promote the summum bonum, which, therefore, must be possible. Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature itself, and containing the principle of this connection, namely of the exact harmony of happiness with morality, is also postulated. Now, this supreme cause must contain the principle of the harmony of nature, not merely with a law of the will of rational beings, but with the conception of this law, in so far as they make it the supreme determining principle of the will, and consequently not merely with the form of morals, but with their morality as their motive, that is with their moral character. Therefore, the summum bonum is possible in the world only on the supposition of a supreme Being having a causality corresponding to moral character." (Critique of Practical Reason, V.)

The above argument seems more like a wish than a proof. It amounts to saying that I have a certain craving for such things as justice, beauty, morality, etc., and that therefore the cause of these must be a supreme Being.

Hegel(1770-1831) answers Kant's objection to the Ontological argument by saying that God is to be thought of as "thought existing", and that the case of the hundred sovereigns is not parallel. The proof, he says in effect, applies only to the case of a Supreme Being.

Hegel further insists that reasoning from cause, order in the universe, etc., while entailing some difficulties, cannot be logically abandoned, otherwise there will be an end to thinking. The mind is not limited by the finite, and therefore to think to the ultimate is not foolish, but necessary.

"That upward spring of the mind signifies that the being which the world has is only a semblance, no real being, no absolute truth; it signifies that beyond and above that apparent being, truth abides in God, so that true being is another name for God." (Logic, Wallace's Trans. pp.87,88).

Some Contemporary Thoughts on the  
Existence of God

I shall select as typical of contemporary discussion of God's existence three articles: one from the "Journal of Philosophical Studies", and two from the "Hibbert Journal".

Professor G.C. Field, in the Journal of Philosophical Studies for July, 1928, writes an article entitled: "Some Modern Proofs for the Existence of God". After remarking that the Ontological proof, and the argument of the First Mover carry very little conviction to modern thought, and that the old form of the argument from design seems not to have an adequate basis in fact, the professor selects two types of argument on which to base his discussion: (1) the demand for a teleological explanation, and (2) the argument from religious experience.

It is natural that Professor Field's discussion of the teleological argument should commence with a reference to modern science; and to begin with he makes a very important observation on scientific method:

"Research in the history and methodology of the exact sciences reveals the fact that these sciences have come into being and developed not merely, as some scientists seem inclined to assert, by the observation and recording of external sensible facts, but by the adoption prior to this of what can only be described as a particular philosophical theory of the nature of reality."  
(Journal Phil. Studies, July 1928, page 325).

He then states that the assumption underlying all scientific research was that "the final explanation of what happened was to be found in those elements which were expressible in terms of mathematics." Anyone familiar with modern research must realize that the general tendency is to reduce things to mathematics, or to explain them in terms of mathematics. We have the modern attempt in educational work to rate native intelligence by numbers. The assumption expressed in general

terms is stated by Professor Field as follows: "The ultimate reality must be one and the same behind all the apparent variations of it." Thus it is shown by the author that there is a connection between the science of the present day and philosophical reasoning as to the nature of things, in that pure reasoning precedes the experimental work. In fact, experimental work is undertaken by the scientist for the purpose of verifying what has already been reasoned as true through the medium of philosophy. The development of the atomic theory is a case in point, as it found what reality must be like in order to satisfy the demands of the reason for intelligibility, and this has been gradually brought to a certain stage of verification.

But the assumptions used as the basis of science do not give us a sufficiently firm basis for intelligibility; our reason demands more than this. According to the teleological argument, the existence of a Supreme Being finally satisfies the demand of our reason for intelligibility, because then there would be a Supreme Intelligence capable of instilling purpose in things, and towards Whom, therefore all things would tend.

When the writer, Professor Field, comes to evaluate this argument, he regards it as valid on two points, viz. its theory of the grounds of scientific knowledge, and the place of the demand for intelligibility in the development of this knowledge. In spite of this, however, he argues that we cannot reduce the proof for the existence of God to anything that can be verified by sensible experience:

"... a doctrine which cannot be verified in sensible experience may, it is true, be pronounced possible, but cannot ever be regarded as certainly established." (Op. Cit. 329)

Professor Field's doubt of the finality of the teleological

argument, as far as satisfying reason is concerned, is expressed in the following words:

"Does the scientific explanation leave us asking for more, while the teleological explanation finally satisfies us? I cannot believe that this is so. I do not know how I can disprove it in a way which could convince those who feel firmly satisfied that it is so. But I think such evidence as we can get both from the general feelings of mankind and the more careful analysis of the idea of purpose is on my side."  
( Op. Cit. 329).

The author brings his argument a stage further by stating:

"How far does the mind or purpose which could be invoked as the explanation of these phenomena correspond with the idea of God that the religious consciousness seems to demand? To take the first point that might suggest a doubt. I have already indicated that for purpose to be accepted as a satisfactory explanation of anything we ought at least to give some suggestion of what the purpose is. And if we ask what kind of purpose is suggested by biological phenomena, the one most obvious feature of it is that it appears to aim primarily at the production of more and more life as long as this was capable of survival in its particular environment." ( Op. Cit. 331).

The author admits the existence of purpose. He states that obviously it is the production of more and more life. It should be remarked at this point that there is no approach to final purpose here, but merely a setting out again on a long chain of events, like the traveller, who, having reached one town on his journey, finds yet ahead of him other towns that he may visit. And as to survival in the environment, it is only a survival in time for any biological being, which fact must bring to one's attention the existence of a purpose different entirely to that of survival. What is the purpose of non-survival?

Professor Field goes on to say that the God of Biology would not be an omnipotent God, although He would be "immensely more powerful than anything that we can conceive from our own experience." But if purpose is admitted, then biological things would have a tendency towards a finite being, which could not satisfy the mind of man in its mighty up-

ward urge. Even supposing a finite being as the God of Biology, it would still be necessary to postulate an Omnipotent God, Infinite in all things, perfections, and attributes, as the only satisfying Object of the human mind. The human mind could never be satisfied with that which it can compass; and the human mind can compass that which is finite. If a finite being were the God of Biology, it is certain that in the course of time man would know as much as the finite being, that disease, death, and all evils would be overcome; that man would make over the world in such a way that he would have all the delights of the best food, drink, and climate; and that in the end the world would become so thickly populated that other planets would have to be sought out. There is no sign that these things will come about, even though man will certainly gain in knowledge; but he forgets a great deal of what he learns, and there is no doubt but that he will continue to do so. Therefore it is hardly likely that man would know all things.

Professor Field says: "... in our ordinary and familiar use of purpose as an explanation we never do regard it as by itself a complete and sufficient explanation of anything." (Op.Cit.332).

I do not think there would be much of a quarrel with Professor Field on that statement, as the mind is not satisfied until it has examined all evidence, not merely part of it. When later the author says: "The conclusion I would draw is that the appeal to purpose as a satisfying principle of explanation has certainly considerable force", he gets to the heart of the matter: for conviction depends upon what set the mind takes, and the set the mind takes depends again on what the will chooses. A man might close his mind to acceptance of a truth through refusal of the will to accept the evidence presented. Against such a mind even valid proofs are useless in certain cases.

While the author does not grant finality to the teleological

proof, he concludes as follows:

"If we are left with anything, it is only with the notion of a whole or absolute as the only final ground of everything within it. This is a notion of which it behoves us to speak with all respect. But it is emphatically not anything like an explanation by purpose. And, indeed, it has been abundantly shown that such a view must necessarily regard purpose, or anything else that involves consciousness and individual personality, as partial, and therefore not ultimately real."

I shall conclude discussion of the teleological argument by observing that St. Thomas Aquinas, in his *quinque viae* dealt with before in this paper, was not content to rest his case on one proof only, but upon five, so that the whole of reality might be considered. Even then, he was not content, for the deductions drawn from the *quinque viae* as to the attributes of the God he reached through his proofs add greater and greater evidence to that already presented in the five proofs. It is only fair to grant Professor Field the privilege of discussing any one of the great arguments, but to express the hope that he too would see the necessity of examining all the arguments.

A significant statement in the second part of Professor Field's article gives an idea of a modern trend in considering the existence of God:

"And yet in much of the best modern thought on the subject this appeal to the religious experience seems to be taking the most important place, and to be increasingly put forward as the chief or sometimes the only rational ground for a belief in God. We are no longer told that God exists, and therefore we must worship Him. The argument is rather that we worship God, and therefore He exists."

This argument is very much like Kant's so-called moral proof. It amounts to saying that we have a feeling that God ought to exist, and then concluding that He does. It asks us to place too great a trust in our emotional experiences. Of course, when it is observed that, as Descartes contended, that all men have the idea of God, the evidence for God's existence is certainly weighty; and if the univer-

sal desire of man to worship something be considered, the existence of God as an explanation of this desire certainly carries considerable force, even if the universal desire of worship is not regarded as an apodictic proof of God's existence.

I turn now to a consideration of whether a Personal God exists. As I said before in this paper, Aristotle did not consider the question at all when he arrived at the notion of the Absolute. The problem is essentially a modern one.

Professor C.D. Broad, writing in the Hibbert Journal attacks the problem by defining what is meant by a person, and then what is meant by a God. The notes of personality he gives as follows: (1) It must think, feel, will, etc. (2) Its various mental states must have fullest unity. (3) Its successive total mental states must have fullest unity. (4) These two kinds of unity must be recognized by itself, i.e. it must know immediately that it is a mind. He then notes three ideas of God: the popular idea, the theological, and the philosophical. In the popular sense, God is regarded as a person. In the theological sense he states that God need not be a person, and notes that the Athanasian Creed says that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, but that there are not three Gods- only one God. It does not speak of the Trinity as being a person, but it does speak of three divine persons as forming the Trinity. In other respects, the theological idea of God is narrower than the popular idea. God must be omnipotent, infinitely perfect, and unique. The philosophical sense in which God is considered is even wider than the popular conception, or the theological.

The professor dismisses the Ontological argument and also the Cosmological by saying that neither proves the existence of a personal God, even if we admit that they do prove the existence of God. Against

the inductive argument from design, he brings the following criticism:

"Even if we accept the argument it will not prove the existence of God in the theological sense. In the first place, it would prove only that a designing mind had existed in the past, not that it does exist now." (Hibbert Journal, Vol. XLIV, page 46).

There are two weaknesses in this statement. There is not sufficient reason to say that things now exist by themselves; if creation be admitted, and if we accept the argument from design we admit creation, it follows that the same creative power now must of necessity conserve the things that are in existence. Secondly, there can be no past with God Who is admitted after the argument from design. Time has nothing to do with the case, because God must be timeless.

In answer to the argument for the existence of God arrived at because of the existence of minds like ours, Professor Broad says that the hypothesis of a God would not explain the existence of minds, because:

"(1) We are still obliged to suppose that there have always been minds, though not always non-divine minds. And the production of non-divine minds from mere matter remains just as unintelligible whether we say that it happens spontaneously or that it is miraculously accomplished by God." (Op.Cit. 46).

It need not be admitted that minds are produced from matter through the intervention of God. On the postulate of God there is nothing to stand in the way of creation of these minds. And in any case, if God is postulated, I have a real explanation of minds that are finite.

An answer to Professor Broad's arguments appears in the same volume of the Hibbert Journal. I quoted from this article in the introduction to this thesis. I shall quote again to show an explanation of reasonableness for a belief in God, even if it is not, strictly speaking, a proof:

"But, on the other hand, if the search for an irrefragable proof has been, in some measure, the chase of a will of the wisp, which appears but to disappear; has been something in



the nature of the search for the philosopher's stone; the same cannot be said of the search for the object of that proof, of the search for God Himself. In all sincerity I ask whether those who have sought for Him, not merely by argumentation, but by moral and spiritual effort, have failed to find Him. Have those who sought for life's ultimate values, for the highest satisfaction of intellect; the most perfect content of heart; the utmost rest of conscience, failed to apprehend, in some fashion, the Being of Whom they were in search." (Hibbert Journal, Vol. XXIV, 400).

It should be added here, in considering whether a personal God exists, that our ideas of personality would not be fitting in relation to God. If God is a Person, He is not the same kind of person that we are. It is true we may define the notes of personality, but when it comes to the case of applying these notes to the Absolute, we may fail utterly.

This thesis would not be complete without mentioning again the idea of considering the arguments as a whole when trying to prove the existence of God. The following quotation will present the case in a very enlightening way:

"We glance around and find that this identity of multiplicity is everywhere true of God and is a touchstone of sound theodicy. For the human mind struggling to see God from such great distances, learns that the pitiful scraps of knowledge that we acquire about Him are rendered most valuable when they are made to support one another, when they are made to converge upon their divine object. It seems as if God's simplicity is such that it is necessarily reflected in the detached bits of knowledge we have of Him. Answer ten questions about God, and then compare the answers. If they are true, they enjoy not merely the coherence that truths always possess, but a unity that looks surprisingly like identity. Let the answers be false, and they will present, when viewed together, no mere ordinary inconsistency, but instead the utter inconsistency of chaos. ... The human intellect is not bankrupt. It knows a little about God- a little, by the way, that is tremendously valuable- but it has not shown itself completely adequate to the task. It never will, as long as the object is infinite and the mind is finite. Our theodicies then, are necessarily imperfect. If we would measure their worth, we have a practical and fairly reliable criterion in their coherence and incoherence." (Collins- Proceedings Sixth Annual Meeting, Am.Cath. Philos. Association, 67, 68).

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